



WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT ALL THERE



Norton Colorado

www.nortoncolorado.org

Newsletter

January 2019



1947 BSA M20 Military

The BSA M20 was manufactured by the Birmingham Small Arms Company from 1937-1955. The factory was located in Small Heath, Birmingham, England.

Although initially viewed as a near failure by the War Office in 1936, the M20 evolved into one of the longest serving motorcycles in the history of British military motorcycling, as well as becoming the most numerous type produced for World War II, with 126,000 in active service. Many are still in use around the world today.

The motorcycle is powered by a 496 cc single-cylinder side-valve, 4-stroke engine producing 13 hp at 4200 rpm. It has a right-side, foot-shifted, 4-speed gearbox driving a chain connected to the rear wheel. It had low compression and plenty of low-end torque through the standard BSA gearbox. The gas tank held 3 gallons. The bike delivered 40-45 mpg.

The 1945 wartime cast iron engine continued in production until 1951, when an alloy cylinder head was introduced, but otherwise it remained largely unchanged. In 1948, M20 models changed to telescopic front forks.

Interesting facts: The Birmingham Small Arms Company was founded in 1861 by 14 gunsmiths to supply munitions to the British Government.

A 1938 BSA M20 ridden by Bill Jenkins from Dallas achieved a top speed of 108 mph at Bonneville Salt Flats making it the fastest M20 to run at Bonneville.

On November 19, 1940, the Small Heath, Birmingham, BSA factory was destroyed by German bombs.



Upcoming Events

See page 7 for the entire official 2018 events schedule.

January 2019

1/1 (Tuesday): New Year's Day Ride

Meet at El Rancho at high noon

1/13 (Sunday): Pub Meeting

2/2 (Saturday): Banquet

Look for club emails for more details about these gatherings.

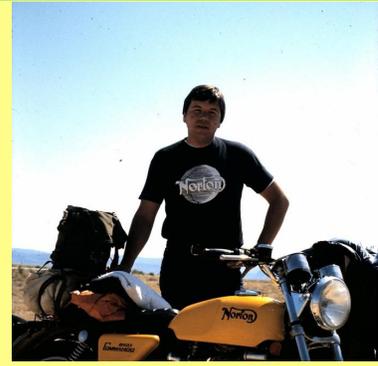
BOB MARTIN RUINED MY VACATION

By:

Russ Willard

Lewisville, NC

November 2018



Russ in 1979

It was the summer of 1979 and I had recently completed my first ever motorcycle rebuild on my '74 Norton Roadster. I had recently purchased the tired Commando from Bob Martin of what was then known as AA Cycle in Longmont, Colorado. It was time for a vacation and road trip to get rid of the Colorado “cabin fever” and to give the Norton a good thrashing.

Bob, another buddy, Bruce Scott, and I decided that Las Vegas, NV would be an easy ride and a great place to catch some rays. Since Bob was a Harley Davidson motorcycle dealer, he indicated that we could attend the Harley Davidson Dealers’ annual convention which was already scheduled for that summer in Las Vegas.

After an overnight on the road in Grand Junction, we hit the road early and stopped in Green River, UT for gas and a quick breakfast. It is time for me to mention that Bob and Bruce were riding new Kawasaki KZ 1300's that blew down the road comfortably and effortlessly while I brought up the rear on my Commando. Of course, I missed breakfast because I was busy adjusting and lubing my bike's chain, checking fluid levels and inspecting for any signs of oil leaks or mechanical failures. My buddies were slamming down Huevos Rancheros in the cafe and watching me through the truck stop windows while I methodically prepared the bike for the next leg of the trip.

The guys finished their meal and urged me to hurry up so we could get back on the road. I mentioned to Bob that I was concerned because my primary chain case actually had more oil in it than it had when I left Golden the night before and was leaking a little more than I would have expected.

Bob casually said “you have a leaky crank seal”, fired up his gunship 1300 and said “let's go”.

How could he be so uninterested in the well-being of my motorcycle?

I was somewhat of a seasoned mechanic at that time of my life but not at all experienced with the peculiarities of a Norton. All I could think of was oil being emptied from the crankcase into the primary case at a rate of a quart or more every 50 miles and the need to stop every 30 minutes for an oil check. I coveted the KZ's at that moment and wondered how the bike could possibly make another 400 miles to Las Vegas and another 750 miles back home? The success of this trip seemed in real jeopardy.

From that moment forth, I rode cautiously while listening for unusual noises and easing the engine through the gears and avoiding hard accelerations. The condition of the engine was paramount on my mind and I was a nervous wreck as I waited for the inevitable rattle of a connecting rod bearing failure or a top end component exploding through my torso. *I never could relax on the bike and enjoy the ride, thanks to Bob. He ruined my vacation.* All he had to tell me is “ don't worry about it” or “no big deal” and everything would have been fine. Meanwhile, Bob and Bruce were setting the pace at about 80 mph and I was silently cursing them for going so fast. I was so tense while riding that I ached from head to toe and could not wait for the gas stops to stretch and check oil levels.

Everything turned out fine in the end as the Norton carried me to Las Vegas and home again without incident. My apprehension of the bike never let up for the entire week of the vacation and I promptly replaced the seal when I returned home. I still own that bike today and Bob Martin still calls me the “Old Leaky Crank Seal”.

Now that you've read Russ' story here's Bob's rebuttal:

Bob Circa 1980

The Leaky Crank Seal

Somewhere in the archives of Norton Colo newsletters lives a story about Russ's adventures installing a belt drive primary on his commando. Perhaps someone can dig this out & Scotty could re run it. Seems like it was in the late 90's.

A little about Russ. One sunny day in 1972 a skinny kid with a goofy grin & a Babe Ruth face happen'd into AA Cycle in Longmont because he heard we sold those Hot Hot Hot British bombs, Norton's. Russ was about 20 then & had to drink a cup of coffee to make a shadow. Son of a gifted engineer he was a student at Colo School of Mines & I think he fixed VW Beetles for spending money.

Russ somehow scraped up enough dough for a 1972 Norton Hi Rider. This, a fateful act which has changed many of our lives. A beginning of the Oddessey changing him from an ordinary human to a skilled mechanic. Russ became a valued friend Through the years. Somewhere along they way I acquired a clapped out Commando that I sold Russ for about \$400. It was all there & the kind of find you might rejoice at now for about five grand. You would know you were committing to years of grief, anguish and possibly divorce but be powerless to resist.

Russ went home & put a lot of elbow grease & a little dough into the bike and came out with a fine running good looking commando. I remember the year as 1980 when we undertook this trip. The precipitating occasion was the 1980 Harley Davidson dealer meeting in Las Vegas. I was a Harley dealer by then and Spirited Russ & Bruce Scott into the Vatican like confines of the Harley dealer meeting as employees.

We stayed at a brand new hotel right across from Caesars Palace & had a fine time ogling the "Bold New Graphics" on the shiny new Harleys

The hotel had a fine pool & cabana area right across the parking lot with good cold beer & shade, perfect place to spend a hot afternoon. Somehow Russ & I got into a discussion of who could run faster after a few beers on one of those afternoons. We arrived at a suitable wager for a one hundred yard dash across the parking lot. I had a pair of Tennis shoes on but Russ had left his in our room & was barefoot. The black asphalt was about 120 degrees, No matter says Russ, I don't need no stinking shoes. As I remember I won the race & Russ sat with his feet in the pool all the rest of the day & limped like Chester Good the rest of the trip.

This was only one of Russ's misadventures. I also remember a heated wrestling match between Russ & Bruce in a motel room in Grand Junction after a spirited night in the Jungle Bar. Lucky we didn't get thrown out. Russ, in those days was not gifted in the judgment area.

Another aside on that trip. Russ's fellow engineers took a Walter Mitty like interest in Russ's great adventure and started a pool on how far he would actually make it. They had a jar of money & a map with pins in it betting on where Russ's Norton would crap out. Russ made it all the way foiling their fun.

So hey. Did I spoil Russ's trip? If so Russ gave me lots of help. We all know a leaky crank seal was no big deal. Wasn't gonna stop ya. If Russ had never checked the primary case oil it woulda been OK. Woulda leaked out the primary & who would know?

Russ went on to be a successful engineer & fine mechanic doing numerous museum quality restorations on Nortons, Harleys, Broncos, Mustangs & even his dads early 70's Porsche.

For a while Russ traveled the south counting the amount of sand in Martin Mariettas sandpiles in quarries. Now I think he figured out that shit runs down hill & they have him designing sewer systems in Mayberry or someplace.



Pints Pub



Reckon someone got a new electric drill for Christmas?



Solstice Ride by Craig Terry

For at least ten years some of us over in Grand Junction take a ride out to the Utah border on the old highway on the Saturday closest to the winter solstice.

I invited my friend Chris from Hotchkiss CO to drive up and ride my Commando as he has mentioned some interest in them. We got the bike fired up in front of my house and I looked over and saw oil gushing out of the near side front rocker spindle cover. That has never happened on my bike. Chris said that every time he gets near a Norton some kind of glitch happens so I am blaming it on him.

We rolled out one my Moto Guzzi's for him to ride and met everyone at a coffee shop then rode out, kicked tires then rode back to Fruita for Mexican food.

All in all, a fun last fling with nice weather this year and good riding companions.



Apparently, someone doesn't approve of the high quality border sign. (Or doesn't approve of Utah.)

Motorcycle Stuff on the web:

V8 Ford Flathead trike

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHkE0eX4qAI>

Eight Years in a Sidecar:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/autos/motorcycles/eight-years-in-a-sidecar/ar-BBH8KNV>

What's going on in your garage?

Now that winter is setting in many of us are spending more time in the garage. Here's two examples . If you are spending your time turning wrenches instead of turning a throttle please send me a picture and maybe even write a paragraph so while we aren't riding we can have something cool to read and look at.



Peter Allen's project continues. Apparently Santa came early and left Peter this 5 speed quaffle for AMC box.



James Lafler 1929 JD

This must be what it felt like when Dr. Frankenstein first applied the electrical current... almost "It's Alive" !
Hoping to smell exhaust in January!



Schedule for 2018

Please check this out and feel free to contact Eric Bergman to suggest more ideas or to volunteer to host an event

February

2/3 (Saturday): Winter Banquet

March

3/3 (Saturday): Group Ride or Museum Visit, depending on weather

3/18 (Sunday): Pub Meeting: Streets of London

April

4/8 (Sunday): Tech Day @ Bob Martin's

4/21 (Saturday): Group Ride & Shop Visit: Jesse Caraway's

May

5/5 (Saturday): Group Ride

5/20 (Sunday): OBR 16

June

6/3 (Sunday): BBQ @ Eric & Susie's

6/14-17 (Thur-Sun): Four Corners Rendezvous

July

7/8 (Sunday): Mt Evans Ride & Brunch @ David Sheesley's

7/28 (Saturday): Group Ride

August

8/4-5 (Saturday-Sunday): Wimpy Campout @ Jamie & Michelle Jones'

8/19 (Sunday): Group Ride

September

9/7-9 (Friday-Sunday): Campout

9/16 (Sunday): English Conclave

October

10/7 (Sunday): Plains Ride (Scott & Julie Robinson)

10/21 (Sunday): Tech Day

November

11/4 (Sunday): Open Garage Ric and Joy Landeira

11/17 (Saturday): DU Hockey Night

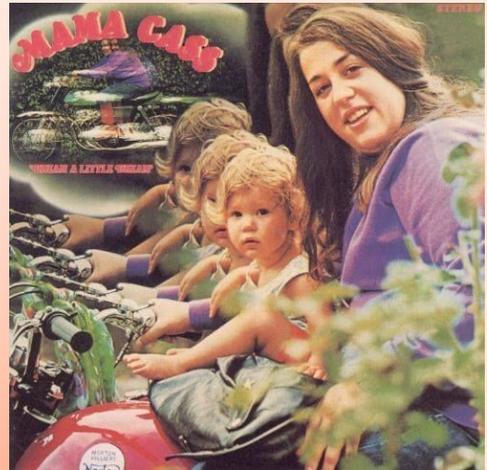
December

12/2 (Sunday): Pub Meeting

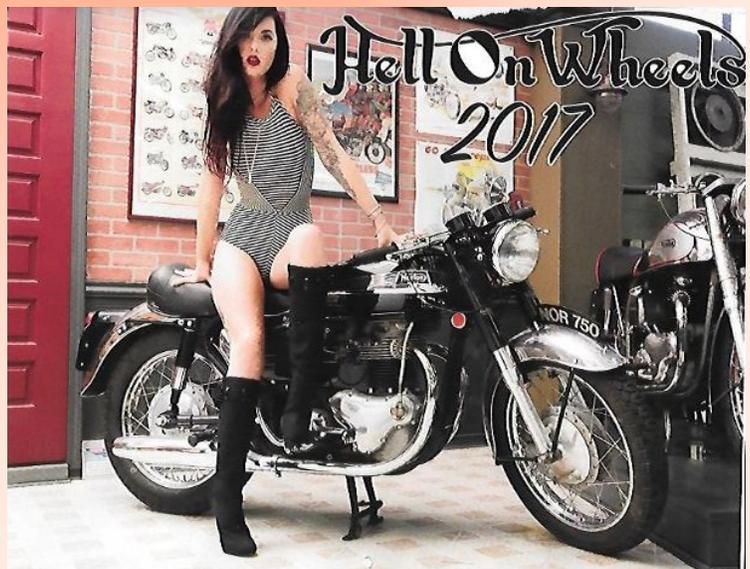
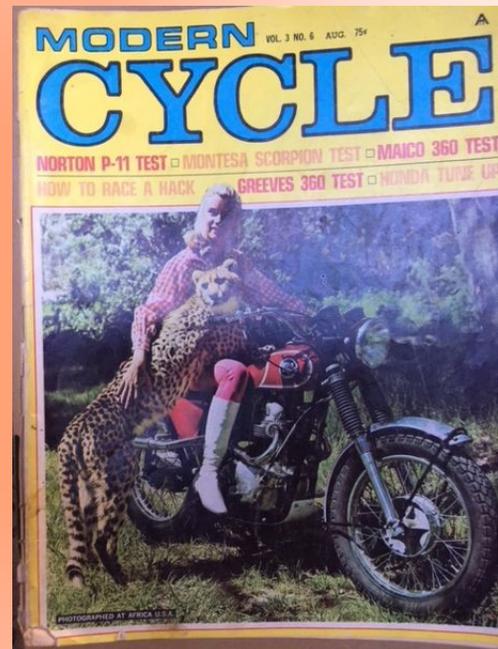
January 2019

1/1 (Tuesday): New Year's Day Ride

1/13 (Sunday): Pub Meeting



Mama Cass was a Norton rider



Membership

Membership in Norton Colorado is open to anyone, regardless of whether they own a Norton, or any motorcycle whatsoever.

Dues are \$20/ year individual, \$22 for a couple or family unit, payable to "Norton Colorado" and sent to the Treasurer, whose contact information is listed on the last page of this newsletter.

The official club membership list is posted on the club website. Please let Eric know if there is an error.

The membership year begins with the Winter Banquet in February. New members who join after August 1 are credited with membership for the following year.

Presidents points race??

Jack set the goal of winning back the coveted President's Trophy this year. Sure looks like he might do it. Let's get those Norton's out and make Jack work for it.

The motorcycle instructor was telling his early morning class:

"I've found that the best way to start the day is to exercise for five minutes, take a deep breath of fresh air, and then have a bowl of delicious cereal with raisins and almonds and a cup of green tea and finish with a cold shower. Then I feel rosy all over."

A sleepy voice from a rider in the back of the room said, "Okay, so tell us a little more about Rosy."

Club Events

Many events have been scheduled for the 2018 season, usually about 2 per month. Participation in these events will be counted for the President's Award. Events may be added, dropped, or re-scheduled through the year. The schedule can be found in this newsletter or check the schedule on the club website:

<http://www.nortoncolorado.org/meetings.html>

Prez Points Standings Top 10 (2018):

	<i>points, events, solo rides</i>		
Jack Abeyta	68	11	21
Peggy Abeyta	47	8	15
Scott Robinson	42	9	4
David Sheesley	40	7	7
Mike Fields	38	9	2
Arnie Beckman	35	8	0
Debby Johnson	28	5	16
Eric Bergman	28	13	0
Dennis Horgan	26	8	0
Bob Martin	24	11	0



My first tie-dye Norton shirt

Current Occupants

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(My new job title reflects my role in the Parts
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Credits: Thanks to Jack Abeyta, Peter Allen, Arnie Beckman, Bob Herman, Bob Martin, James Lafler, Jerry Pokorny, Al Slarks, Craig Terry and Russ Willard for their contributions to this newsletter.

I also want to say thanks to others who sent me things I will use in future editions.

Norton Colorado

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